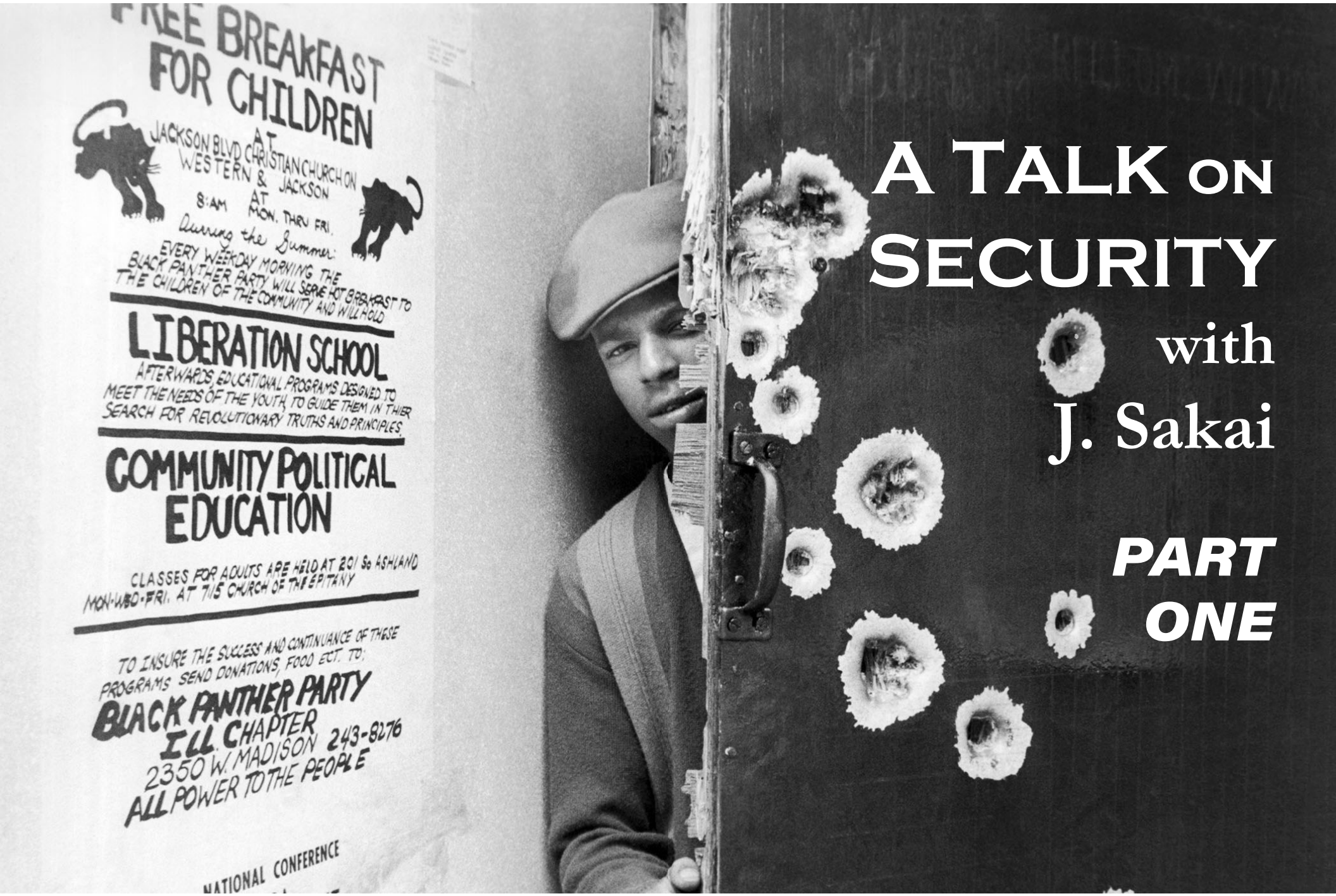
A Talk on Security with J. Sakai

PART ONE



culture and it weaves instead into that terrain all their old oppressor politics, their values. At which point we're confused, it's all backwards. We're alice-in-wonderland now on their side, their ground, so to speak, even though we don't have their views.

So i'm just going to stop here.

What you see is a young undeveloped left in which a small group of working-class women figured out who an agent was, dangerous he was. Because more than just being smart, Tom was a very aggressive and manipulative guy. And they thought they had gotten rid of him, just banished him out of the movement. But some middle-class guys who had gone to NYUs and Berkeleys, those young white guys said in effect, "Who cares what those women think!" They were sure they knew better.

Tom the "revolutionary," they passed him onto the Panthers who absolutely should have known better, except of course they were caught up in their own patriarchal thinking—revolutionary attitude that's male attitude, aggression, being more violent, forcing your will on people, being the tough important guy...Tom looked great to them!

Well, a lot of people actually ended up getting hurt out of it. They only surfaced one killing because the feds couldn't admit that they had their agent do a torturing and killing spree through the movement. Tom was like, "I was nowhere near anything and I never knew what happened. I just heard about it later when I couldn't do anything except tell the FBI, blah, blah, blah." Complete lies, the grapevine said.

So here's this mini tragedy. Certainly a successful disrupting of movement activity, that should have been stopped at any number of points, but **bad politics covered for agents. So we don't need good politics because that makes us into super people because it doesn't. It's that bad politics—like opportunism, patriarchy, sexism, class privilege—rips up the fabric of our terrain, the area of our radical**

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PART ONE

This informal talk was originally given on May 27, 2013, in Montreal, as part of Festival of Anarchy.

in the Panthers, "Yeah that guy, he looks like an agent, I'll beat the crap out of him until he talks, throw him out," torturing people, the whole thing.

It culminated, he had gotten a ranch up in the mountains he called "Guevara Ranch" where he had bomb-making classes. So one night they lured a leading Black Panther revolutionary activist Fred Bennett to "Guevera Ranch." Fred Bennett was leading the defense around getting support for George Jackson and the other Soledad brothers in prison, the black revolutionaries who were leading the struggle in prisons in California at that time. He was the chairman of that committee. Anyway he was killed. He was tortured and shot to death and his body was set on fire, burned and buried, etc. So nobody knew what happened. All of a sudden a couple weeks later the FBI in and the police descend, they dig up the body, they started raiding Panther offices and they get a witness saying so-and-so and so-and-so was involved.

Tom suddenly appears in suit and tie before the u.s. senate subcommittee on intelligence to explain how, "Yes, it's terrible the Panthers, they're killing their own people, they're so demented and violent that they're torturing and killing other Panthers. Terrible." Actually of course Tom instigated the whole thing and he was proud as shit of it. For a settler fascist, to have manipulated the vaunted Black Pather Party into killing one of its own best people—and have done it with the stupid help of those "rich university leftists" that he hated so much—he really loved that.

Okay, when you reel that back what do you see?

So, half the people in the movement said, "Wow, what a revolutionary! Poor, working-class, so angry he can't contain himself, he's gotta be a revolutionary." The other half of the people in the room in the movement said, "You know, he's a stone mental case, he's so crazy that the FBI would never have somebody like that. He's totally undisciplined and untrustworthy. So, he may be bad news, but he's not an agent." So both sides, for different reasons agreed that he wasn't an agent.

Only problem: Tom *was* an agent. Tom was crazy like a fox. Tom was just a fascist, that's all. So, eventually through the movement he got introduced to the Black Panther Party in Northern Cal and Tom reminded them of a very—to him—important moment in history and this is again where we see the relationship between bad politics and bad security in a practical sense.

Back at that conference, remember, Tom and the guys completely mopped the streets with the Progress Labor activists and sent the Maoists leaving, running for their lives. So Tom could later remind the Panther leadership, "Remember that? I was the guy who did that and I know all this stuff—martial arts, bomb making, I can teach marksmanship, I was in the marines, I was in intelligence in the marines. I was really good at, you know, interrogating people, wink wink (i.e. torturing people). You got agents, bro', in your group, I can help you with this."

So the Panthers say, wow! They're impressed: a settler guy who had fought on the streets to defend us and he's got all these skills and now he's gonna help us find the agents. So Tom launched on a spree of bad jacketing honest ordinary people

i'm going to speak for a little while generally. Then i'm going to go more into security, and how state infiltration against the movement has worked. This is in the u.s., mostly, what i'm familiar with. And what its results were, and both the movement's successes and failures in terms of combating the security agencies. Kind of some of what really happened. And then we can have Q&A. Okay?

A lot of times when we think about security we're still kind of uneasy about it. It's kind of like this little box way off on the side. It's not part of how we think of our regular politics or struggles we're involved in. Maybe, to us it's kind of a little dirty, and something confusing. Not certain how we can relate to it as a question. And if we do try to relate to it and deal with it, then we suddenly discover that, "Darn, there's no *Security for Dummies*." You go to the bookshelf and there isn't a book. Because the tradition is, at least in the u.s. where i come from, that this is a question where knowledge is handed down and transmitted by word-of-mouth, kind of personally. So sometimes when there's a generational discontinuity, big gap in passing on of this. So that's one of the reasons i'm talking about it here.

i'm not an expert on security from some security commission, i'm not a professor, i have nothing against them, but that's not what i am. i'm not a professor who studied this for their lifetime and who writes books on it. i'm just a movement activist. And so i've been taught basic things that i'd like to pass some of it on. i've witnessed security successes against the state and security failures, i'd like to pass that on.

Security is an area that's essentially divided into two parts. The

first is our attempt to understand, keep track of and spotlight police activity. Eventually at some points even penetrate the armor of state domestic security agencies. What traditionally has been called the "political police."

The second part, of course, is dealing with their attempts to infiltrate our movements and activities, gain information against us, jam things up, harm people—and don't make any mistake about it they're definitely into harming people. This is not the nice guys' club, no matter what they always say.

Forgot to say during the talk, that the security lit that has been available is usually about the more dramatic illegal or underground work. Such as Victor Serge's often-reprinted classic on clandestine tactics to evade the Russian Czarist police. Or the 1980s Black Liberation Army pamphlet that's taking off from Serge's lessons, "Fooling" by Seldom Seen. They're good but not our greatest need, it isn't on that level that's the biggest problem. It's for security understanding about public mass movements, for ordinary groups, that operate more-or-less on a legal level. Since this is the origin, the entry point for almost all people and issues into rebellion. And if we can't make it work on this level, we sure can't do a more difficult level.

The key thing is, to start with—and it's the most basic understanding—security is not about being macho vigilantes or being super suspicious or having techniques of this or that. It's not some spy game. **Security is about good politics**. That's why it's so difficult. And it requires good politics from the movement as a whole. Not from some special body or leadership or commission—from the movement as a whole. This is demanded of us. It's part of the requirement to be a revolutionary, that you try to work on this.

When we say "good politics," well, what is that? Everybody will say they have good politics. So really this cannot be assumed. It absolutely has to be broken down. Or, as the congregation

me another chance." But the women weren't going to stand for that shit. The women said, "No, Tom. We've known you your whole life and you're a racist and now you're a damn agent, get out of the room." So they kicked him out.

So Tom went and we thought, oh, that's the end of that. The guy's been kicked out of his own community group by people who've known him his whole damn life. Hey, he's gone permanently, we don't have to worry about him, good or bad, whatever he is. Yeah, we were wrong about that!

Well, Tom went to the university student movement leader and they were nationally important people on the left at that point and they'd been kicked out of the neighborhood and were pissed. Tom played them, using his men's solidarity angle. It must have been something like, "Yeah, those bitches, they kicked us out, well I'm with you bro"' and ka-ching! The next movement radical conference, there's Tom being vouched for by these middle-class student leaders. Damn, we know he's an agent, but suddenly he's back in the movement again!

He goes back to California, to Stanford, not to school but to hang out, he makes his living doing armed robberies and boasting about it. He's knocking over a liquor store, a grocery store, whatever, he's doing armed robberies, selling drugs, stealing drugs at gunpoint to sell, never gets arrested, gee, wonder why. And beating people up. He's picking fights in the movement. You know, he'll come to a meeting and, "I don't like what you're saying," suddenly he will lunge himself across the room. He was actually really good at fighting. And he'll start pounding the crap outta some guy.

baited in her town and whatnot for being against racism and so she actually had experienced politics.

So i came to this meeting and the women said you don't know what's happening, just vote with us, don't worry, i said "okay" and they called out one of these guys, the guy who was Tom, the white power dude who was causing all the trouble.

The thing was...Tom was, the guys knew he was a troublemaker, they said that's just how he is 'cause they grew up with him in the neighborhood. He grew up on the streets with them. They all knew each other for years. So to say, Tom is no good and to just kick him out, the guys couldn't do this.

But the women they were serious, they just said, "Tom we have to talk about you. The fact is you're always causing trouble, and second, you're a damn racist. No matter what you say, you're a racist. And third, when we add that up, we think you're an agent. Why else would you be doing this shit, right? Except that you gotta be an agent. So, we're taking a vote. Our motion is: Your ass gets kicked out. Oh, by the way, you and all the university students. Part of our motion is that you have to be a worker, a working-class person, to be in the group, like it's a union now. All the university students who are being famous at our expense, we thank you for all you've done for us, we love you, and you can now leave because we're now voting to kick you out, too." There were some surprised people in that room.

And bingo! Tom was doing his usual excuses, "oh, it's politics that it's so hard for me to learn, 'cause I had no education." Though he had no trouble getting into Stanford. He was hanging his head and whining, "I wanna learn, I'm sorry, give

always shouts back at the Baptist preachers, *"Make it plain."* So we're going to try and make it plain, as much as we can here.

First of all, good politics is not the ideology you may or may not have learned from reading a book of Marx or Proudhon or something like that. That's good, it's part of education, part of politics. But that's not sufficient. In terms of security, that and 2 bucks will get you a cup of coffee. That's about it.

Security demands a higher level of politics. A level of practice and experience, in all three of its aspects. It demands individual experience, collective experience, and historical experience, melded into one knowledge. And that may be a lot for us, but it's just part of life, it's what's demanded of us, to do this work.

You know, after all, if you think about it, it's like revolutionary zebras, a collective of them on the high savanna in Afrika. They're always being stalked by predators. Well, how do they deal with that? They deal with it usually pretty handily. Because that's their terrain. They can read their terrain. The ripples on the grasses, all the information brought by the wind. They read that, they understand it.

The same with us when we struggle with capitalism. When we attack capitalist society—that area that we're on, that we're engaging them on, this is for that time our terrain. Part of the terrain is still theirs because this is still capitalism. A part of it is now ours because we made it so. And we have to be able to read that terrain, the constant ripples, changes in it, and understand what they mean, you know, in real life.

It's just like, when i came into the movement—had been around

the movement from my early teen years, just cause i hung out with the small pack of nerds and leftovers in secondary school, and many were from movement families. But when I was 18, i joined a social-democratic organization which was pretty moderate and pretty worthless, really, but it was there and i was so glad to find other people to join with and do something political.

Within a year i met 4 people in the group or who came to its public meetings, who were agents. And this is not some case of rumors that they were said to be agents, they all sooner or later confessed to being agents. Okay? In each of the four cases i would not have thought they were agents, i was 18 years old, why would i have thought someone was a police agent? i wasn't thinking of that stuff. Someone quietly came up to me and said, "You know so and so is probably an agent, and this is why. You should listen to him, check it out. This is why we think he's an agent."

So, one guy, for example, clearly he'd gone to see a Hollywood movie or two about leftists or anarchists or something, and that's what his act was based on. He was a young college dropout, finding excitement by working for the FBI. So he had a dramatic pose, wore a beret and a black turtleneck sweater, and he smoked Gauloises, the French cigarette, like what he thought the Left Bank of Paris was like. The other thing is he always made these really angry-sounding speeches which were incomprehensible because he actually didn't have any politics, you know. He didn't have any good political points or bad political points, he didn't have any political points at all just about. He was peppering his speech with all kinds of words that he heard others use. The "dialectic" this, the "oppressor"

pro-movement white guys. Teens and men who had come over to the revolution, wonderful, but it was odd that it was almost like there were no women there. But it turns out that there really were women there, and they thought this was really a bad scene. Their guys are really getting turned around.

So first of all they went and recruited some of us to come in, though we didn't know what the hell was going on. And—the other thing was by the way this neighborhood was not all settler. For example it was overwhelmingly poor but it was not all white. It was the major neighborhood center for Native people in the Chicago area, for example. In a similar way, it was a center for some of the Asian peoples. There were 15,000 indigenous people in the neighborhood (and over 6,000 Asians), which wasn't really mentioned in the left propaganda or anything because of the importance of the whiteness to the left of the young guys they were organizing...

So the women with the group started recruiting a few people of color and women with civil rights movement experience, basically just to make certain there wasn't a racist outbreak going on there. And then they convinced some guys, they talked to some of the guys and said "look, we have to deal with this, what's going on." Two of the women in particular i remember—one was an older woman, they were both older from my point of view, could have been in their 40s or 50s. One of the women was Native, and disabled and had 2 kids and was on welfare, and the other woman who was truly leading this was a white southern woman from Appalachia who had no education at all except that she had been through union organizing battles as a poor woman working in a factory, and had the klan try to shoot at them and had been communist

shit right out of him. Frankly, because Tom had been seriously fighting people and hurting people his whole life, so you might have got yourself a black belt in a dojo but this isn't the same deal as getting mixed up in a chaotic street brawl.

So that Summer we heard him saying, pretty smoothly, "Hey, all these black people, they're talking about black power. I'm all for that, That's wonderful. I love them so much we should adopt the same slogan for us—White Power! That should be our slogan, White Power." So some of the guys were influenced, like, "Oh, that sounds pretty cool, white power, I like that." What Tom wasn't telling them was that "White Power" was right then an official slogan of the neo-nazi movement in the u.s. And had the added treacherous appeal of seeming to be only "equal" with Black Power, while denying that in "race" terms settlers didn't need to demand power since they already had it all.

We were saying, "Hold it, just a minute, we might want to think about that, you know, whoa, whoa, whoa." And so Tom went around everybody else, convinced a couple guys to go with him and they went to the button shop and they got a thousand buttons printed up saying, "White people gotta get it on." What exactly does that mean anyway, right? But there's kind of a common theme in the work he was doing, you know. It's all about white people being angry and doing things by themselves and for themselves and that's the main thing. There's kind of a pattern about what he was doing.

Anyway so the women—mostly it was a small group of women—you see all the propaganda about this group done in the left talked about guys. How they were like a street gang of

that. It was just peppered in.

After awhile, i wasn't listening to him. i was just tuning him out. But when i was listening to him and he just didn't have any politics at all, that i could ascertain—so what the hell is he doing here? Then it dawned: Oh, *that's* why you think he might be a police agent! And the more experienced comrades didn't try to beat him up or anything, just made fun of him—and created a kind of bubble around him. Anything important wasn't discussed near him.

When we look at domestic security agencies, the political police (and it may be somewhat different in the u.s. than in Canada, my experience is all in the u.s. so i may be saying things that are really obvious as A-B-C to people in Canada and you know this all already and that's good, so i'm sorry if this is just old stuff), what we see is the regular police force always justifies political policing and domestic security persecutions as the normal outgrowth of their claimed attempts to be preventing mugging or having traffic accidents or whatever.

i've never forgotten about that real unimportant police spy, in part because of a completely unrelated incident. Many years later, was sitting in on a small meeting as a gofer, just in case anyone wanted coffee or we had to go photocopy something. It was a big-shot Hollywood agent and her client, an actress named Angelina Jolie, trying to convince some prisoner support workers who had been in the news lately, to sign over the rights to their life stories without any payment. Usual capitalistic rip-off biz. But what i was thinking about all the while was: "Don't i know her from somewhere? She's real familiar somehow." Which bothered me, since obviously i didn't know her. Then it hit me, damn, she's just like that police agent actor character was years ago. The mind is a funny thing, connects up things in unexpected ways. She also had

a beret and a black turtleneck sweater on under her worn denim jacket, just like he did. His face had been rough, with like acne scars, and hers—now that i really looked at it—was all professionally made up to look off, a bit disfigured like she'd been in a factory accident or something. What crap, for a political meeting with the movement! And she was actually even crying at one point, weeping, saying impassioned but illogical things, trying to get over with her ripoff of our movement. Good try, rookie, but like him she was detected as phoney and politely repelled from our terrain.

This is totally untrue of course. Instinctively we know it's untrue, but factually it's just completely untrue in several ways. First, obviously, because the everyday police are there primarily to protect capitalist property and maintain that order in general. While the political police are a part of that, but more narrowly are a counter-insurgency police targeted against political enemies of the state, and in particular dissident groups of the colonized peoples and classes. That is, we could see them as an intelligence police for the oppressors in our permanent internal class war.

Let me use an example which may not seem to connect up for awhile. So bear with me:

Once i was on federal government probation for a couple of years for a protest they didn't like, and by "coincidence" my probation officer happened to be the commanding officer of the 113th u.s. Army Military Intelligence Detachment, which is a reserve unit. And his supervising my probation consisted of every few weeks he would appear unannounced at my job, in front of everybody haul me out of work, march me out actually in front of everybody. Put me in the lobby or the hallway and subject me to his, what he obviously thought was his very slick

scholarship (few of the other poor white guys had even gone to secondary school). But Tom had dropped out, had kicked around at a different job, and finally come back home to join the movement. And he was pushing definite strong politics, which to me tripped all the alarm bells.

Say what you want about him, Tom did have game. In 1969 the Panthers had called for their United Front Against Fascism, a national conference to unite the left against fascism in amerika under their leadership. Whether that's a good or bad idea, not germane to us here. The main Maoist group in amerika at that time, called the Progressive Labor Party, said, like, "This is outrageous, this is a fraud. The Panthers, who are they? They don't follow Chairman Mao, they have the little red book, but the only true Maoist leadership here is us. So therefore we're going to go to the conference, but we're going to stay a block away. We'll form a line in the street around the conference." What we had heard from the movement grapevine, was that they were threatening to physically stop anybody that came to support the Panthers. Sounded like they'd lost it mentally, going to just beat the shit out of anyone and basically prevent them from going to the conference. Don't know.

But that was a mental moment made in heaven for manipulators like Tom. It isn't true that someone else's bad politics like that early Maoist group trying to play little stalin, only affects them and doesn't hurt us. So he quickly organized a group of our guys from the neighborhood, this was while he was still in the group. They flew out there and they just literally marched tight at the Progressive Labor guys who were led by—they actually had their martial arts class there with an instructor with a black belt—went right at the PL karate instructor and punched the

that was political. First organized to do a protest march on the local cop station, against police harassment of poor white youth. And the middle-class university radicals were overjoyed. The working-class Southern whites who were supposed to be racist and patriotic redneck and against the movement, well, they had convinced some of them in this neighborhood to join the movement. To be anti-war and for the Black revolutionaries and even ally with them and so on.

To some degree, though, those middle-class radicals were way inexperienced and didn't quite know what they were doing. When i got into that scene, it was surprising politically. The street organization, which had a hard core of a couple of dozen members mostly from teenagers to guys in their mid-twenties, and maybe a supporters layer of that many, had a small group of about five or six guys who were central, who were leaders in a somewhat informal way. Everyone looked to them to start things, but two of these guys were clearly like fascists. You have to keep in mind whenever you go down, all the way down into the oppressed and very poor, there isn't one class there but always two. The lower working class and the lumpen do not just coexist, they share the same streets and homes and families, they're people mixed in with each other fighting to survive on the same shared terrain together.

One guy in particular seemed an obvious fascist and an obvious danger, because he really did want to lead things his way. Tom had grown up in the neighborhood, where his mom was still a "working woman" in the same slum residence hotel they had lived in since he was a kid. He had grown up with many of the other guys, and they all knew him as one of the smartest guys around. Actually, he had even gone to Stanford on a

psychological intimidation and brain washing. And it's kind of gross, and i'm going to mention it only for two reasons: one to show what they really are like and secondly because the u.s. military are still using these exact same tactics that they were trying to use on me, which were really simple and ugly:

He would say, basically, "You know, I'm your friend and here you are, you know you're a young guy in trouble and you know you just aren't having fun in life and here's why," and then he would start with all the stories of all the Asian women he'd used and how in Korea the lowliest G.I. in his unit had 2 women that sexually serviced him full-time and he of course had many more being the big officer and you know the life you could have if you came over to his side, you know, and became a real man, which i wasn't. Be a real man and you could go around the world raping women, forcing women into brothels and so forth.

So this is kind of wacky. Why would he be saying this dumb crap? And then i realized: well, firstly he's trying to obviously mess with my mind. You know, week after week, we would have this little conversation. First of all if he could get me to break, like, "Okay, i can't take this anymore, and i'm going to punch you out." Well, then, hold it, then I'm in jail for another couple years. Well, he wouldn't mind that. Or, he keeps emphasizing the thing that, see, he's a real man. i'm not a real man, of course, because i don't have these things, i'm not doing these things that real imperialist men do. So he kept saying to me that i could either hate myself because i'm not a real man, and this may sound funny but this works sometimes on young guys. Or, i could somehow find his spiel attractive because he always said, you know you could have all this. You don't have to have

your miserable life, you could have this glamorous military life; you could be in in some Asian country with all the local women you want or if you like another country to have women in, you can do this too.

This sounds unbelievably stupid and crude, and it was. Well, do you know, they're still doing that to this very day. The u.s. army has things that they use. It's unofficial of course. They will disavow it. But they always use it. For example, specially against Asian guys. So you have an 18-year-old Asian volunteer in the army who was stupid enough to join anyway knowing he was going to go to Afghanistan to kill civilians or get his ass blown off. Anyhow, so he's there and the typical thing is, the training sergeant will walk by him and he's in the barracks looking at home pictures. You're lonesome and you're homesick and you're looking at home photos. And the Sgt. will come lean over your shoulder and will say "Oh, that's a nice looking girl, Is that your sister?" and you'll say "Oh, yeah." The Sgt. says, "Yeah, I thought so, I fucked her when I was on leave" and then he walks away and says, "Next time I'm going to fuck your mother." So, of course maybe you can...once again, you can punch him out—well, a year or whatever in jail for you—or you can start hating yourself because you have to take this crap, or think you're not a man like he is.

The thing is what does this have to do with policing? With security? It turns out the 113th Military Intelligence detachment was part of the shadow government behind the Chicago Police Red Squad that was investigating and infiltrating the 1960s–70s antiwar movement. They and by implication larger military agencies, were selecting targets and guiding our local police. And in fact they got into a lot of trouble, this military intelligence

information they need to put away a whole group or blunt a whole offensive. They absolutely will do these calculated things in cold blood every time.

So this is just practical experience, part of our practical knowledge as revolutionaries. We have to understand these details.

Let me tell you about an FBI penetration of the movement that had mixed results. Of course, the thing about it is that it's completely over and completely documented publicly so we fully know the results and we are not endangering anybody by talking about it.

At the end of the '60s, i was recruited...i was living on the south side of Chicago and was recruited by a small group of working-class women to join a community, a revolutionary community group far on the other side of the city. And i got talked into it, so moved to join this organization. It was a working-class, mostly white revolutionary group.

So, this group had an interesting history. When Students for a Democratic Society (or SDS), the nationwide white university radical whatever mass anti-war people of that time went on the offensive, one of the things they wanted to do was to break out of their class world. They started student-run organizing projects in poor working-class neighborhoods, often using the name "Jobs Or Income Now" or JOIN. Newark, Baltimore, Chicago, a few other places. So in Chicago these student radicals "colonized" one particular poor neighborhood, temporarily moved activists in there to live, and started organizing. One result was a small street organization of Southern white youth

anything about us until we got arrested, cause if they'd known a week before, a month before, a year before, well, they would've arrested us then." You see, because this is what my comrade Yaki calls the colonial criminal mentality: that the security cops are about arresting you for violating the law. That's what they care about. That isn't true. They actually don't care about any of that shit. You can't have bigger criminals and law-breakers than the cops.

But people, if you think this way you get completely misled as to what security agencies are doing, **because they will absolutely let you do things to get the deeper information or reposition agents they need to advance their own plans.** We have plans, they have plans. Don't think they're just individual cops enforcing the law, not true and far from it.

The CIA through an agent inside the Brazilian movement learned for example of an airline hijacking in the 1960s about to take place down there. Now you would think that they would stop that right away. No, because to stop that might have exposed their agent. They let the airline hijacking go right on, all kinds of people were terrorized and some killed, and the airline was hijacked but their agent—he'd proven himself as a rev, right? i mean, you can trust him because of actions like the airline hijacking, the whole thing. Anyway, 2 months later he finally found out about the CIA's No.1 target there, a guy named Carlos Marighella, who was one of the main revolutionary guerrilla leaders in Brazil at that time, who wrote the famous "Mini Manual of the Urban Guerrilla," who they absolutely wanted dead. And they finally killed him. So what do they care about airline hijacking or a bank job or two or ten if they can get somebody that they really want, if they get the

After the meeting i got questions about whether we could better define the difference between police in general and the political police? Since many of us can see that all the police patrolling the occupied neo-colonial peoples in New York City or Los Angeles, for example, are pretty damn "political." You know, in middle-class "white" suburbs and expensive urban neighborhoods, most police work is about individual crimes with little of it lethal or even violent—you know, a car gets vandalized or something is stolen out of a garage or someone is drunk and disorderly. Completely different in the neo-colonial zones, where the cops are visibly uninterested in stopping the wholesale epidemic of burglary or muggings or rapes or killings, but only work to pressure youth away from of civilian life and into the drug trade and gunfights and prison.

In the talk i bent over backwards to emphasize the division between regular capitalist policing and the political police, because too many comrades assume that the political police are just some of their own familiar police but turned around to focus on them. Not true strategically. The political police may be similar people and similar uniforms but have of necessity a very different mindset and plans.

Having said that, we have to also recognize that the repressive arms of the state are steadily coming closer and closer to each other, becoming more like each other, as global capitalism develops and also homogenizes divided societies and cultures. Beat cops in neo-colonized communities who have always been an alien occupation force, now have to function as an adjunct to organized intelligence units. Just as police SWAT teams in the 1970s were only the initial cutting edge in the militarization of local police forces. Right after images of the killing of Osama bin Laden by the elite u.s. special ops commandos went worldwide, i also saw a newspaper photo of Brazilian police tactical officers leaving a favela of the poor they had invaded—and from the dark coveralls to the bulky loaded combat vests and military ballistic helmets and full-auto assault rifles on long slings, the two groups of u.s. elite commandos and Latin Amerikan police completely looked alike.

detachment, because they weren't content with that and they started sending their own guys out to observe the movement, maybe sabotage it or whatever. Except they got caught doing it and that was kind of embarrassing, because the u.s. army wasn't supposed to be doing that in the city of Chicago. The cops are supposed to be doing it. The division of labor for bourgeois legality purposes. **But when we say that political police are not just an outgrowth, an innocent extension of local policing, right, this can't be emphasized too much.**

Like New York City, in the late '60s the New York City Police Department decided it had to get rid of its Red Squad, because traditionally the subversive squad in the New York City police department was geared on investigating trade unions and all that old stuff that was really hot in 1920. Or was after the Communist Party or something Cold War that was dead as a doornail by then, and they weren't really keeping up with the times. So it became clear that the Red Squad had to be totally rebuilt. So u.s. intelligence—not city hall in New York—u.s. intelligence said, you know, New York is the major capital in reality, it's critical to us. When we see that the police department has a problem which is that they're a white settler police department representing a white settler government, ruling a city with a large colonial population of color that's increasingly getting rebellious. And they don't know what to do about it because they have these old-fashioned anti-subversive ideas.

So who has more expertise in a situation like theirs? Oh, those settler South Africans in Johannesburg!

So u.s. intelligence arranged for a team of counter-insurgency detectives from what was then named the South African

Well, that's true in some way and in a deeper way not true. Almost all rebellion begins in law-breaking, under capitalism. The problem is that that framework leaves your thinking still within the capitalist system and their values as your reference point.

So that i wish i had a dollar for every time some young guy has told me in a movement meeting or a demonstration, "I'm not afraid to talk to the police because I've done nothing wrong." Well, first of all you're an ass for thinking that. But secondly, it's not about doing something wrong, breaking a law or something, right? Because what's really happening is, it's class war—there's a war between those of us in the oppressed, fighting with the oppressed against capitalism, and those who are defending the system. So this isn't about cops and robbers. But people tend to think of it this way—precisely because that's how bourgeois culture always tries to get us to think of rebellion.

By the way, the "I'm not afraid to talk to the cops because I've done nothing wrong" stuff even on the immediate practical level is not too bright. What the political police want is to update their map. They're mapping the terrain of the rebellions. So if you prove to them, plausibly, that you and your six friends didn't do anything illegal last week—and know nothing about it—that helps them narrow the search for the revs who did. You are just helping complete the map to guide their drone strikes, as it were.

So that, for example, i've talked to guys who are experienced revolutionaries, who've in the past been through armed urban guerrilla groups, who've been in prison, and sometimes they'll say something like, "There's no way the cops could've known

In 2013 the Chicago cops did a big public relations stunt funded by the National Institutes of Justice that they said would cut down the murder rate. Using a sociological computer analysis, they allegedly identified by name the 400 young people most likely to either shoot someone or themselves be shot. A group that as a whole supposedly were 500 times more likely in be involved with violence than mythological "average" Chicagoans. Then area police commanders supposedly visited the homes of persons on the list to warn them to change their lifestyles and associates. How helpful that was (being sarcastic there). The list avoids the predominantly settler North Side, of course, and is only about residents of the heavily New Afrikan and Latino South Side and West Side. What is revealing is the amount of intelligence the cops are regularly collecting on the oppressed now.

stop the revenge back and forth if they wanted to.

So they're pretty open that they have the intelligence to do this, not that they bother. Which raises a few questions, like so you know each person's crew, their basically criminal work associates, you know, the guys they fight alongside, the fallbacks and where they hang out. And you can just arrest them because somebody in their crew got shot even though they didn't do anything yet? You couldn't even begin to do that unless the state security had updated computer files on the personal lives of masses of oppressed people.

Okay. The thing about security agencies and the political police is that they're not playing cops and robbers. One of the big political things, and you're not going to find this in Lenin or something: bourgeois society conditions us to think of rebellion as a cops and robbers game, like their story is it's crime and punishment. There's two sides. The state and whatever. They want us to obey the law and we're saying "no," rebelling, we're the criminals breaking the law and that's what rebellion is.

Bureau of State Security (obviously called by the acronym "BOSS") in Johannesburg, i.e. the settler Afrikaner political police, to fly over to New York and to help be the big brothers, reorganizing, retraining, getting the New York City political police up to speed. To honor their Apartheid mentors, the N.Y.P.D. also officially named its own political police squad after them, also "B.O.S.S." It was their settler guys' little imperialist in-group joke, since their whole relationship was secret back then (the squad's name has been changed several times since then, naturally). Today the New York City political police, which is commanded by a former top CIA official, has branches all over the united states and in eleven foreign cities, including Toronto. It's a little far from New York City, but they clearly have their reasons to maintain that major investment in terms of what they're doing.

The difference between regular policing, capitalist crap as it is, and the political police is going to become apparent as we talk because there is an important difference. One of the things that's true about the political police throughout the capitalist world is that they're all different but also all "family" in the sense that they're descended, unbelievably as it is, from the Okhrana, the department for the protection of the public order of the Czarist government in late 19th-century Russia. Which was the first modern political police force under capitalism and was actually quite innovative. Its genetic makeup persists literally to this day inside political police almost everywhere.

So the Okhrana did the usual things you would think. They followed people, infiltrated groups, arrested people, blah blah, blah. But they actually also had a whole different strategic vision, which was really controversial inside that primitive Russian

state. It's controversial actually today in most capitalist states, because there's a division in security between the people who in effect want to do accelerated or militarized policing—"Well, why can't we just arrest them all, just beat them up and shoot them, and put them in prison as much as we can, right, at every opportunity"—versus the people who actually usually end up running things, because to be honest they're smarter. They have an interesting view. They have our class understanding actually. They're just on the other side.

i was in a classified library once—a law enforcement library, with publications that would fill this room, and mostly none of us has ever seen these things because they're classified—reading a classified FBI political journal. The FBI had political journals. One of the agents stationed in their bureau in Latin Amerika—because in amerikan security the world is split between the CIA which handles international stuff and the FBI which handles domestic stuff but that including all of South and Central Amerika, since South and Central Amerika in the u.s. ruling class mindset is a lesser part of the u.s.a. "It's ours, by imperial birthright," kind of thing. So the FBI is there and they have agents throughout all of the capitals and so forth (as the CIA does, too, obviously). So this FBI agent is writing a theoretical article about how to stop revolution. He's saying something like: "Some people wanted to just stamp it out, get rid of all the revolutionaries. That's impossible because the overwhelming majority of people in the world hate us. They hate American corporations, they hate Wall Street and they're always going to hate us. There's no way to change this."

i'm reading this and i'm, "Hey, you know, they finally got clued in."

there are roughly, there are known to be over 100,000 youth in street organizations, i.e. the "gangs," maybe even close to 150,000 something like that. There were as of last year about publicly known street organizations ranging from the Latin Kings to the El Rukns to the Gangster Disciples and so on, the groups of young men who are currently shooting each other like in my neighborhood. The largest of these para-military street organizations have many thousands of members.

Many of these 100,000 plus kids, cause it's a lot, there's a file on. But this isn't necessarily a usual individual police file, or an arrest record. No, often it's a security file. A normal police file might have your name, address, phone number and your arrest and cop contact record. While a security file has all your family, your relations, school and medical record, the places you like to go to drink or recreate, the economic activities you are known to be into, the corners where you hang out, your enemies, the crew in the street organization that you work with, your homies, you know, your fellow soldiers and friends. They have a complete dossier of your activities, on who you are. Of course, being cops, they are also clumsy on the job and get many names and facts wrong as cops do.

It's amazing. They just put enormous resources into that. They brag for example, that like if i were in such a "gang" and i got shot, you know one day, the next day they could go around and prevent the conflict from spreading by simply picking up all the guys in my crew. Because they know who they are. Well, hold it, they're not the ones who shot me, right? So, see, the thing is that the guys in my crew were the guys most likely to be shooting back at the other organization that shot me and so the police would be doing "preventive" arresting, you know to

said, "We'll even have an entry on Socialism, who could we ask?" The secret police said: "Well, there's a guy named Lenin. You've never heard of him, but he would be a good guy to have write this." So they even wrote to him, like would you please do the entry on socialism for the kind of official Russian encyclopedia?

Clearly they made a few small mistakes in doing it this way, and in fact there's lots of criticism of them in capitalist police theorist circles, like: "The Czar's secret police really messed it up. They were really too arrogant. They thought they could maneuver around everything. Well, see what a mess they made out of it. Blah blah blah."

So, to the security agencies, **the most important thing is not immediate arrests, it's information.** That's the lifeblood of their work. And they're going to infiltrate us to get it. As well as all the other surveillance stuff, okay?

So, when we talk about information, to be honest, we are not primarily talking about what a room of 50 radical people do or don't do because they're actually operating on a much bigger scale. Because don't forget, it's probably true that every single person in this room not only has a file in the computers of the Canadian police, but you certainly have a file in the computers of the u.s. political police. That's like virtually guaranteed.

But its effects run much bigger than that because to them any organization of the oppressed, even "gangs" that they are at the moment de facto sponsoring and manipulating, are potentially really dangerous. They could get out of control, get politically aware. So that in Chicago, the city where i'm from, for example,

He said, so the "We'll just stamp them out like they're insects or something" strategy isn't going to work. Well, actually, you could never get rid of insects. You could tell that in the real world so, he writes, that's not really practical. It's not a good way strategically to proceed. What we have to do is let everybody hate us. We can't stop that. Let them have anti-capitalist, anti-amerikan opinion, fine. But when they organize into groups, when they have dangerous movements, then we don't worry about average people who hate us. That's like confusing the issue. Then we go specifically into those movements, those organizations and we destroy them, as much as possible. There's no talk anywhere in this article of rights, civil liberties, human rights and laws. They don't care about these things. We think they don't care about them and they really don't care about them. Believe me.

A friend was teaching a class of policemen, of cops. The class was report writing, because you think cops are illiterate and everything else and can't sign their names barely and that was true more than they liked. And so the commanders get those reports back of some major incident and it's completely indecipherable. So you have to give them the usual how-to-write lectures, i guess. Anyway, the thing is, my friend was telling them: gotta learn to write honestly, concisely, clearly, really tell people what happens, when you write that report. So one of the cops jumps to his feet and says, "If I told what I did I'd be in prison!" Everybody applauds, all the other cops applaud. "Right, no more of this accurate report writing shit."

So, this has nothing to do with laws, they don't care about laws. We don't care about them, they don't care about them. We think most people in the world should hate capitalism. They

agree, absolutely. You know, that's why they're always trying to mess us up. Otherwise they'd just be laissez faire—"Oh, the revolutionaries, let them do whatever they want, you know, let the protesters run around, you know, give them whatever, it doesn't matter 'cause you know the people will reject them." They don't think that. Believe me, they do not think that.

They think, "We have to really be on top of these people, and sooner is better."

So the Czarist Okhrana had both factions; the "stomp them out" cop faction and the more strategic "we have to manage this" faction. So, they ended up doing things like sponsoring trade unions. Originally, trade unions were illegal, workers want to organize and "Hold it! just a minute! you can't be doing that, damn subversives!" And the Okhrana said to the other cops, "You hold it, you can't stop the workers from doing unions. They are miserable and pissed off and they're absolutely going to do *something*. Why don't we start our own loyal trade unions that are like, you know, hate the boss, demand more money, but love the government. The government is on your side."

So literally the whole legal trade union movement in Russia was started by the political police. If they arrested a band of underground illegal revolutionaries they always would leave one or two people unarrested. They were called breeders. And the reason is really simple. Their worst fear was that rebel movements would start and they wouldn't know anything about it. They wouldn't know anybody in it. That was a really terrible idea to them.

So they'd always leave some people not arrested so when new

people came into revolutionary anger and awareness they'd seek out the people who were known as revolutionaries, and since those were under surveillance they would actually just be leading people to be in the files of the secret police. The Okhrana would even sponsor what is now called encapsulated gangs, where there's even like illegal armed terrorist or robbery or guerrilla organizations at the center of which are genuine revolutionaries. But unknown to them mixed in with the new recruits are police agents and they're letting the group proceed because as long as they know everything it's doing, has everything under surveillance, and it has prestige and new people get drawn in, they're just getting an enormous influx of information. The primary thing for political police. And then when they're ready they wipe this group out and set the stage for a next doomed group.

In other words, they want to control dissent, rebellion, manage it. They don't want to try and eliminate it because they don't think that's possible. They want to control it. By controlling the movement as much as they can. There are limits obviously of what anybody can do on this.

To give an example, they were really alarmed about anarchism. Anarchism wasn't strong enough in Russia in the 19th century to overthrow the government, nevertheless it was destabilizing society and more so all the time as most people know. So they said, well we have to have an antidote. Let's get people to have a different kind of dissenting ideology than this anarchism. So they picked out a variant of socialism, that was popular at the time called Marxism, and they said, well, we'll make this legal. So if you're a dissident and you want to study all these exotic ideas, learn this Marxism. The great Russian encyclopedia